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partisan, shows at all times a sympathetic insight into the character of the men who led the vigilance committee and into the complex problems they were called upon to face. From the records of the committee, as given by Miss Williams, one gains new appreciation of the orderliness and restraint with which the members of that body carried out their self-appointed and often grimly effective task of enforcing law to save society from anarchy or mob rule.

If the reviewer's judgment is not at fault, this history of the San Francisco committee of vigilance of 1851 will stand as the final authority on the subject for many years to come. Miss Williams has made a noteworthy contribution to the movement, now in progress, of the rewriting of California history.

ROBERT G. CLELAND

The Michigan fur trade. By Amanda Johnson. [Michigan historical publications. University series, volume 5] (Lansing: Michigan historical commission, 1919. 201 p.)

It is a source of satisfaction to know that the study of the early American fur trade is beginning to receive the attention which its importance merits. During the past few months there have been an increasing number of monographs and other studies which have added to our somewhat inadequate knowledge of the subject. The investigation of the fur trade presents peculiar difficulties of treatment, which are clearly illustrated in Miss Johnson's monograph. First of all, the fur or peltry trade is a tremendously broad subject, both in point of view of time and of geographical area. It has been carried on, at one time or another, over practically the whole continent. Moreover, it began with the earliest explorations and has continued down to the present, though recently, of course, its relative importance has diminished. The student who approaches the study of the fur trade is confronted with the necessity of limiting his subject in point of time or space or perhaps even both. He may trace the history of the industry from the beginning in a given locality; or he may study it in its broader aspects during a limited period of time. Miss Johnson has chosen the former alternative. During a large part of the period covered by her monograph, Michigan as a political unit did not exist. Her self-imposed limits in the matter of treatment, then, are to a certain extent arbitrary and illogical. In fairness to the author, it should be said that she has endeavored to avoid purely local or antiquarian treatment and has tried to emphasize the broader significance of her subject. The fact that her attention has been centered primarily upon Michigan, however, has occasionally resulted in her losing sight of certain general aspects of the fur trade which are essential to an adequate conception of the industry, with reference to Michigan or any other locality.

Bearing in mind the limitations involved in her choice of a subject, the author's general treatment of the Michigan fur trade is good. Her style is clear and readable and the arrangement of material is excellent. She traces her theme through the French, British, and American periods, and concludes with a descriptive chapter dealing with the lives of the traders and with trading methods. There are frequent summaries and the reader never loses himself in a maze of unfamiliar facts as is his frequent plight when he picks up a doctoral dissertation. The local aspects of the fur trade are well treated and anyone interested in the history of Michigan will find a great deal which will be worth his while. It is when the author ventures to generalize that her treatment of the subject is less satisfactory, for the reasons which have been stated. An example or two may be cited. First of all, Miss Johnson says too little of the character of the fur trade as a business enterprise. During the British period, for example, Montreal was the economic center upon which the entire trade of Michigan and of the Great lakes region depended. The city is mentioned casually in the text, but the name does not occur at all in the index. Even the local trade of Michigan cannot be understood without some more adequate notion of the larger economic organization of which it was only a part. In the final descriptive chapter the author confines her attention almost entirely to the life of the wilderness trader. But what of the merchants established at Michillimackinac and Detroit? What were their relations with the great firms in Montreal? Where did they secure the goods used in trade and what became of the furs which they bought? Again, it is related on page 67 that the British policy of making the trade free to all comers "ended in disaster." Yet during the British régime the trade flourished as never before and British traders secured a hold on the industry in the northwest which was not shaken off until after the close of the war of 1812. English and Scotch merchants operating from Montreal, Detroit, and Michillimackinac had a positive genius for the fur trade and for the management of the Indians, which the author apparently does not appreciate.

There is one instance in which Miss Johnson falls into a somewhat common misstatement of fact, and that is with regard to the origin of the so-called Mackinaw or Michillimackinac company. She says, on page 91, that "what became known as the Mackinaw company was established about 1783-4." The Michillimackinac company was not formed until 1806, but in this case the author has simply repeated the error of predecessors in this field.

It is clear from a careful examination of the bibliography that a good deal of available manuscript material has not been used. There are important manuscript collections in the Canadian archives at Otta-

wa, in the library of the McGill university, and in the Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice, in Montreal, bearing upon the subject matter of this study. Probably none of this unused material would alter the author's conclusions, but it would throw much light upon the economic aspects of the fur trade, with regard to which very little is said. There are some rather mediocre maps designed to illustrate the text but it would seem that they might have been more useful if they had been inserted at the appropriate places in the text rather than placed at the conclusion, just before the appendix.

Notwithstanding the criticisms which have been offered, Miss Johnson has done an excellent piece of work and further studies of this character will be welcomed.

WAYNE E. STEVENS

The story of American democracy, political and industrial. By Willis Mason West. (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1920. viii, 758 p.)

The title of a book should give the best possible indication of its contents. This rule, though an elementary maxim of historical composition, is frequently not observed. A common violation is the use of such general terms as "democracy," "nationality," "progress," and "frontier" to cover almost any kind of material. One finally becomes skeptical in regard to books with such terms in their titles.

The book under review is subject to such criticism. The title is misleading. The book is a revision of the author's earlier *American history and government* (New York, 1913), a book the title of which corresponds admirably with the major part of its contents. No more helpful brief manual of American history and government exists for a summary review of our past than this earlier book. It is clear, analytical, well organized, with little questionable interpretation of the period prior to the civil war, and well provided with pedagogical aids. The revised edition, however, goes by another title, without any obviously sound justification. Much in American history, as the contents of this book particularly well reveal, has not been democratic. Aristocracy, oligarchy, or plutocracy are portrayed in the contents of the book and might with considerable validity have been included in the title.

Unfortunately the new book is not provided with the necessary pedagogical aids. It contains no bibliography and little footnote assistance. It seems apparent that it was written for the general reader and was not intended for classroom use. Such an intention is a justification for the new edition, even possibly with its new title, though the size and weight of the book, might, with such an intention, have been considerably reduced.

In content *The story of American democracy* possesses most of the